

Exploring God's Call to Surrender Everything

"Illuminate: Learning to Trust and Surrender Through the Life of Abraham"

Genesis 22:2-18

November 4, 2018

BIG IDEA

Abraham found a new future by exercising unimaginable faith. A productive Christian life is one that is lived by faith. A church that is growing and moving forward is one that is driven by faith. I want you to find freedom, hope, and purpose as we explore God's call to surrender everything.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

God called Abraham to his most severe test yet. It would drive Abraham to trust beyond any measure of human understanding, but if he passed, he could find the joy of surrendering everything to God.

Genesis 22:2-18

He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you."⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said,

“Here I am.” ¹²He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. God’s Command Was Stunning

Genesis 22:2-3 – He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Abraham must have had many things running through his mind. He was being asked to sacrifice his son, who was the key to God’s promise that his descendants would outnumber the stars and be a blessing to the nations. Without Isaac, how would this promise be fulfilled?

- a. **What have you have sacrificed in your life? What did that mean for you?**

- b. **What would be very difficult to give up—something that if you were asked to give up, you’re not sure you could?**

- c. **Have you ever been changed by a sacrifice you’ve made?**



2. Abraham's Obedience Was Quick and Striking

Genesis 22:3 – So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

It is the important things that can quickly turn into idols both as individuals and as a church. Isaac was Abraham's most important possession. Now God was calling Abraham to an extreme act of obedience. He was calling the great Patriarch to sacrifice everything. Could he sacrifice his son? He came through with flying colors.

- a. **After Abraham waits so long for a son, God now asks him to be willing to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar of the Lord. How does this make any sense?! How is this fair?! What emotions are going through your head and your heart right now after reading this passage?**

- b. **It is tempting for Abraham to believe (or for any of us to believe) that anything given to us by God is OURS, not his. How does this passage remind you of things in your own life that you do not view as completely surrendered to God but still as yours?**

- c. **What is preventing you from surrendering to God and his plan for your life, even though the future seems vague to you? What is preventing you from being fully surrendered to him and trusting him with faith beyond the horizon?**

3. Abraham's Faith Was Deep and Binding

Genesis 22:4-8 – On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you."⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a



burnt offering?"⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

Abraham confidently announced to his attendants that he and Isaac would return and then proceeded with arrangements for the sacrifice. He was confident in the durability of God's promise. He believed that even if Isaac were to be killed, God would raise him from the dead, or God would provide a substitute for his son.

Hebrews 12:1-2 – Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

- a. **To run the race with Christ means committing to it and not growing weary. Jesus gave His life for us because of the joy set before him in heaven. When you think about your response to that type of sacrifice and Jesus' call upon our lives to run the race as we are "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses," how does that influence your thoughts regarding your illuminate commitment and the impact it might have?**

- b. **The fact that Jesus humbled himself by succumbing to a human death and becoming the ultimate sacrifice for our sins demands a response from us. What will your response be?**

- c. **Surrendering your life to Jesus is not just about agreeing to follow him; it is about actually following him, following his example, and living as he did. If someone who didn't know you looked at your financial commitments, would they say that statement is true about you? Or is there something that needs to be explained or modified as you think about this illuminate season ahead?**



4. God's Answer Was Prophetic

Genesis 22:9-18 – When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹² He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide” as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

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God's intervention showed that he never intended Abraham to go through with the sacrifice. The test, though, was real. “The angel of the LORD” (either a messenger angel or the pre-incarnate Christ) stopped Abraham just as he took in his hand the knife to slay Isaac! Because of Abraham's complete obedience, God now knew that Abraham would hold nothing back.

Abraham's obedience reaped huge rewards. It introduced Christ's substitutionary death (the ram in the thickets) and the coming of Christ (the nations of the earth will be blessed).

- a. **Isaac was treasured by Abraham, but God's will still came first. What is your Isaac? Are you letting something get in the way of sacrificing everything to God?**

PRAY

Lord, help me to learn to give everything to you. I trust you with my life. I know that when I am fully surrendered to your will, I will find a deeper relationship with you. Amen.



DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [*The Dangerous Duty of Delight: Daring to Make God Your Greatest Desire*](#) – a book from John Piper
- [*The Legacy Journey: A Radical View of Biblical Wealth and Generosity*](#) – a book from Dave Ramsey

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Commitment Sunday!

"Illuminate" – Believe In Him (Genesis 18:16-32)

